

Site Visit Checklist

Being an effective community school advocate requires building strong relationships with your senators, representatives, and their staff. Some tips to keep in mind while you prepare before, during and after your visit with your policy maker.

Before your Visit

- ✓ Scheduling
 - Schedule individual or group visits with your elected officials.
- ✓ Prepare
 - Treat this as an important meeting by preparing in advance. The mark of a successful legislative visit is leaving the legislator with a good sense of why you were there.
- ✓ Do your Research
 - Learn about your elected official's priority issues, and the committee on which he/she serves.
 - Bring statistics and facts about your community school/organization.
 - How can your official's support help your community school?

During your Visit

- ✓ Arrive Early
 - If you are running late, call and let them know.
- ✓ State the Purpose of your Visit
 - Tell your elected official who you are representing (community school/organization), and what the purpose of your visit is.
- ✓ Make it Local
 - Connect the issues you are discussing to what is happening with your Senator or Representative's state and district. Explain how your community and the policymaker's constituents are affected and how community schools address these issues.
- ✓ Listen, Respond, and Don't Argue
 - Your elected official might agree with you – that's okay! Identify issues of concern or differences of opinion and respond based on your knowledge and experience.
 - Be positive and firm. Legislators generally want to help.
 - Tell the truth. Credibility is critical to a successful relationship.
 - In a team visit, work with your colleagues, allowing all to participate.
- ✓ Wrap Up the Meeting
 - The entire visit should not take longer than 20 minutes
 - Summarize your key points and positions
 - Leave fact sheets, other information relevant to community schools, and your contact information.
 - Don't forget to thank the elective official for their time!

After your Visit

- ✓ Follow Up
 - Send a thank you letter. ([See Sample Thank You Letter](#))
- ✓ Keep the Federation for Community Schools informed
 - Let the Federation staff know how your visit went and where your elected official stood on the issues you discussed.